

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1-14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) In a mechanism, a computer-implemented method of awarding loyalty points to patrons of a gaming establishment, the computer-implemented method comprising:

receiving activity data associated with an activity by the patron of said gaming establishment, wherein the activity data does not include identification information or account information for the patron;

determining based on the activity data automatically that [[a]] the patron has begun an activity for which loyalty points are to be accrued without receiving the identification information or account information for the patron;

determining, based on the activity data and one or more other factors, an accrual rate for accruing loyalty points for the patron;

accruing automatically the loyalty points, based on the accrual rate, for said the patron during the activity without receiving the identification information or account information for the patron;

awarding to the patron some or all of the loyalty points accrued during said the activity; and

issuing to the patron a loyalty program instrument designed or configured to store the awarded loyalty points without the identification information or account information for the patron in manner in which the awarded loyalty points can be redeemed by the patron without receiving the identification information or account information for the patron, thereby allowing the patron to redeem the loyalty points anonymously without revealing his or her identification information or account information.

~~wherein the mechanism is further capable of awarding the loyalty points to the patron without receiving one of identification information, account information and combinations thereof from the patron prior to awarding of the player tracking points.~~

16. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 15, wherein the gaming establishment is a casino.
17. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 15, wherein the gaming establishment is a gaming entity comprising a plurality of venues.
18. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 15, wherein said activity is playing a gaming machine of the gaming establishment.
19. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 15, wherein said activity is playing a game of chance within the gaming establishment.
20. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 15, wherein said activity is a food purchase, an entertainment purchase, a transportation purchase, a lodging purchase, a merchandise purchase and a service purchase.
21. (Original) The computer-implemented method of claim 20, wherein said activity occurs in a venue within the gaming establishment.
22. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 20, wherein said activity occurs in a venue affiliated with the gaming establishment.
23. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 22, wherein the venue affiliated with the gaming establishment is in communication with the gaming establishment via the Internet.
24. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 15, wherein the loyalty points stored on the loyalty program instrument are redeemable for at least one of comps, goods and services provided by the gaming establishment.
25. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 15, wherein a rate at which the patron accrues loyalty points varies according to one or more of a time of day, days of a week, months of a year, an amount wagered, a game denomination, a promotional event, a game type and a rate of wagering.

26. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 15, wherein the accruing of loyalty points begins without receiving a player tracking card from the patron.

27. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 15, wherein the accruing of loyalty points begins without receiving player tracking information from the patron.

28. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 15, wherein the patron has a player tracking account with the gaming establishment.

29. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 15, wherein the patron has a player tracking account with the gaming establishment, and wherein the accrued loyalty points are awarded to said patron anonymously, without crediting the patron's player tracking account.

30. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 15, further comprising:

converting some or all of the accrued loyalty points to at least one of goods and services without crediting any of the loyalty points to a player tracking account.

31. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 15, further comprising:

crediting the loyalty points stored on the loyalty point instrument to a player tracking account of the patron.

32. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 31, wherein the loyalty points are credited to the patron's player tracking account using at least one of a phone, a gaming machine, a clerk validation terminal, a cashier station, a casino kiosk, a hand-held wireless device, video display interface in a hotel room and via mail.

33. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 15, wherein the loyalty program instrument is at least one of a printed ticket, a magnetic striped card, a room key, a portable wireless device and a smart card.

34. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 15, wherein the loyalty program instrument is designed or configured to store one or more of prize information, loyalty point information, an establishment, a location, a bar code, a instrument type, an issue date, a validation number, an issue time, an instrument number, an instrument sequence number and a machine number.

35. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 15, further comprising:

redeeming the loyalty points stored on the loyalty point instrument for comps, goods and services using at least one of a phone, a gaming machine, a clerk validation terminal, a cashier station, a casino kiosk, a hand-held wireless device, a web interface and a video display interface located in a hotel room, and via mail.

36. (Currently Amended) In a gaming machine, a computer-implemented method of awarding loyalty points to an anonymous game player, the computer-implemented method comprising:

receiving first gaming event data associated with a first gaming activity on the gaming machine, wherein the first gaming event data does not include identification information or account information for the anonymous game player;

detecting, based on the first gaming event data, a first gaming event initiated by the anonymous game player at the gaming machine;

in response to the first gaming event, accruing loyalty points without receiving the identification information or account information for ~~said~~ the anonymous game player;

receiving second gaming event data associated with a second gaming activity on the gaming machine, wherein the second gaming event data does not include identification information or account information for the anonymous game player;

detecting, based on said second gaming event data, a second gaming event at the gaming machine;

determining an amount of loyalty points accrued between the first gaming event and the second gaming event without receiving the identification information or account information for said anonymous game player; [[and]]

awarding to the game player some or all of the accrued loyalty points; and

issuing to the game player a loyalty program instrument designed or configured to store the awarded loyalty points without the identification information or account information for the anonymous game player in manner in which the awarded loyalty points can be redeemed by the anonymous game player without having to provide his or her identification information or account information, thereby allowing the anonymous game player to redeem the loyalty points and still remain anonymous

~~wherein the gaming machine issues the loyalty program instrument to said anonymous game player without receiving identification information or account information for said anonymous game player.~~

37. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 36, wherein the loyalty program instrument is designed or configured to store one or more of prize information, loyalty point information, an establishment, a location, a bar code, a instrument type, an issue date, a validation number, an issue time, an instrument number, an instrument sequence number and a machine number.

38. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 36, wherein the loyalty program instrument is at least one of a printed ticket, a magnetic striped card, a room key, a portable wireless device and a smart card.

39. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 36, wherein the first gaming event is one or more of depositing an indicia of credit into the gaming machine, inserting a card into a card reader located on the gaming machine, activating an input button on the gaming machine, inputting a loyalty program instrument into a gaming device on the gaming machine or entering a code into the gaming machine.

40. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 36, further comprising:

storing information to the loyalty program instrument.

41. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 36, wherein the second gaming event is detecting zero credits registered on the gaming machine, the gaming machine remaining idle for an amount of time, detecting a tilt condition or detecting an error condition, detecting a game player's request for a loyalty program instrument.

42. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 36, further comprising:

- inputting a first loyalty point instrument into the gaming machine;
- determining an amount of loyalty points stored on the first loyalty point instrument;
- validating the first loyalty point instrument; and
- when the first loyalty point instrument has been validated, adding the loyalty points stored on the loyalty point instrument to an amount of loyalty points awarded to the game player.

43. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 42, wherein the loyalty point instrument is input into the gaming machine using at least one of a card reader, a wireless interface, a bill validator and a ticket reader.

44. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 36, further comprising:

- displaying the awarded amount of loyalty points to the game player.

45. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 36, further comprising:

- storing loyalty program transaction information on a memory device located on the gaming machine.

46. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 36, further comprising:

- sending loyalty program transaction information to a gaming device located outside of the gaming machine.

47. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 36, further comprising:

displaying a prize menu wherein the prize menu includes one or more prizes redeemable for an amount of loyalty points;

receiving a prize selection selected from the one or more prizes displayed on the prize menu; and

when the amount of loyalty points required to redeem the prize is less than an amount of loyalty points available on the gaming machine,

issuing a loyalty program instrument wherein said loyalty program instrument is used to redeem the selected prize.

48. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 36, further comprising:

presenting a game play sequence between the first gaming event and the second gaming event wherein said game play sequence includes game play of one or more games.

49. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 48, wherein the one or more games is selected from the group consisting of video slot games, mechanical slot games, video black jack games, video poker games, video keno games, video pachinko games, video card games, video games of chance and combinations thereof.

50. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 36, wherein a rate at which the player accrues loyalty points varies according to one or more of a time of day, days of a week, months of a year, an amount wagered, a game denomination, a promotional event, a game type and a rate of wagering.

51. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 36, wherein the loyalty points are accrued without receiving a player tracking card from the game player.

52. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 36, wherein the loyalty points are accrued without receiving player tracking information from the game player.

53. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 36, further comprising:

performing a loyal program instrument transaction.

54. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 36, further comprising

presenting on the gaming machine at least one of a particular game, a particular bonus game, a game feature and a bonus game feature in exchange for an amount of loyalty points redeemed on the gaming machine.

55. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 36, wherein said accrued loyalty points are determined by a logic device located on the gaming machine.

56. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 36, wherein a first gaming machine is designed or configured to communicate loyalty point information to a second gaming machine.

57. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 56, further comprising:

simultaneously accruing loyalty points on the first gaming machine and the second gaming machine;

communicating an amount of loyalty points awarded on the second gaming machine to the first gaming machine;

combining an amount of loyalty points awarded on the second gaming machine with an amount of loyalty points awarded on the first gaming machine; and

issuing a loyalty program instrument designed or configured to store the combined awarded loyalty points.

58-103. (Cancelled)

104. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method of claim 56, further comprising: wherein the player tracking points are accrued without initiating a player tracking session.

105. (New) A gaming apparatus comprising of one or more processors adapted and/or configured for:

- receiving activity data associated with an activity by the patron of said gaming establishment, wherein said activity data does not include identification information or account information for the patron;

- determining based on the activity data that the patron has begun an activity for which loyalty points are accrued without receiving the identification information or account information for the patron;

- determining, based on the activity data and one or more other factors, an accrual rate for accruing loyalty points for the patron;

- accruing the loyalty points, based on the accrual rate, for the patron during the activity without receiving the identification information or account information for the patron;

- awarding to the patron some or all of the loyalty points accrued during said activity; and

- issuing to the patron a loyalty program instrument designed or configured to store the awarded loyalty points in manner in which the awarded loyalty points can be redeemed by the patron without receiving the identification information or account information for the patron, thereby allowing the patron to redeem the loyalty points without revealing his or her identification information or account information.

106. (New) A gaming machine comprising of one or more processors adapted and/or configured for:

- receiving first gaming event data associated with a first gaming activity on the gaming machine, wherein the first gaming event data does not include identification information or account information for an a game player;

- detecting, based on the first gaming event data, a first gaming event initiated by the game player at the gaming machine;

- in response to the first gaming event, accruing loyalty points without receiving the identification information or account information for the game player;

receiving second gaming event data associated with a second gaming activity on the gaming machine, wherein the second gaming event data does not include identification information or account information for the game player

detecting, based on the second gaming event data, a second gaming event at the gaming machine;

determining an amount of loyalty points accrued between the first gaming event and the second gaming event without receiving the identification information or account information for the game player;

awarding to the game player some or all of the accrued loyalty points; and

issuing to the game player a loyalty program instrument designed or configured to store the awarded loyalty points in a manner in which the awarded loyalty points can be redeemed by the patron without receiving the identification information or account information for the patron, thereby allowing the game player to redeem the loyalty points without revealing his or her identification information or account information.